



Higher Failsworth Primary School

‘Working together for an Education for Life’

Attendance Policy

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Staff Member:	Safeguarding and Pastoral Manager / Head teacher
Policy Ref:	PHW2

Statement of Intent

Higher Failsworth Primary School believes that good attendance is essential for all our pupils if they are to gain the maximum benefit from the education that we provide. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life, ensuring they are 'school ready, work ready, life ready.'

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school we will support families to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Ultimately it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day. Our school's expected level of attendance over a school year is 95%.

The school's attendance champion is Michelle Warburton and can be contacted via info@higher-failsworth.oldham.sch.uk

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or School Office any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day, and ensure that their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:30am, using the studybugs app or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (E.G. Dental/medical appointment)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible and provide proof of an appointment If the child's absence is due to an appointment with another agency (E.G Health)
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested
- Where necessary home visits will be completed
- School may mark an absence as unauthorised retrospectively if contradictory information is found and will notify parents.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Local Authority Attendance Officer
- Will not accept reasons for absence from pupils or siblings. Reasons for absence must be provided by a parent or carer.

Examples of absences (authorised/unauthorised)

Authorised absences:	Unauthorised absences:
● Genuine illness of the pupil ● Hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil	● Holidays in term time ● Wedding/birthday celebrations
● Major religious observances ● Visits to prospective new schools ● External exams or educational assessments ● Approved sporting, cultural or competitive activity *(see leave of absence)	● Child's birthday ● Oversleeping due to a late night ● Looking after other children/other family member ● Appointments for other family members

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

- Punctuality to school is crucial, lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school doors open at 8.45am for FS/KS1 and 8.50am for KS2.
- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place as soon as the school doors are shut (FS/KS1 8.55am and 9am for KS2) and pupils who arrive after this time must enter via the School Office to ensure they are accurately recorded as on the premises, this is done by signing in on the INVENTORY electronic system by an adult.
- Children who arrive after registration will receive a late mark. Children arriving between 8:55/9-9:25/9.30am will receive a late mark.
- Children who arrive after 9:25/9.30am will receive a late mark (U mark) which is classed as an unauthorised absence, and counts towards the 10 unauthorised sessions that can result in improvement notices being issued. Should there not be sufficient improvement following the issue of the improvement notice, a penalty notice may be issued.
- Children who have been for a medical appointment and have provided school with medical evidence will receive a 'medical' registration mark as such.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 12.45pm for FS, 1.00pm for KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2.
- Children who are collected late will need to be signed out using the INVENTORY electronic system by an adult.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, staff act in loco parentis (in the place of a parent) and are therefore legally responsible for knowing the whereabouts of pupils throughout the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return on the INVENTORY electronic system.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, within school hours, parents are to report to the School Office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence (holidays) will **NOT** be authorised during term time. **All leave of absences must be reported via the 'absence request form', which can be obtained from the school office or the school website.**

- In “exceptional circumstances” permission may be granted providing your child has good attendance and the Headteacher is satisfied that the request complies with the “exceptional circumstances” requirements.
- Exceptional circumstances are considered as one-off situations (once in a lifetime event). If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorised. Each application will be judged on its own merit.
- If leave (holiday or leave of absence) is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised ‘leave’ absence and the Local Authority Attendance officer will be notified.
- School staff are not expected to provide additional work for the child during the leave period.
- The Governing Body of Higher Failsworth Primary School has determined that NO holidays taken in term time will be authorised and in accordance with Oldham Local Authority guidance, the school will refer for a fixed penalty notice to be issued for unauthorised holidays of 10 or more sessions (2 sessions = 1 day).
- Absences immediately before or after a scheduled holiday will not be authorised without medical evidence.

*Requests for leave relating to approved sporting, cultural, or competitive events, or for children with a performance licence, will only be granted where there are no attendance concerns. A letter from the approved organisation will be required in all cases.

Extended Leave of Absence

Where a pupil is absent from school for 10 or more consecutive days the school must inform the Local Authority. Extended leave of absence must be requested and risks the child’s school place being revoked and filled by another pupil. The school will take the following steps;

- Request sight of travel and or accommodation tickets.
- Agree a return date.
- Inform parents of loss of place after 20 day absence – pupils will be ‘off rolled’.
- Parents are expected to contact the school if any circumstances change.
- Parents should sign an agreement acknowledging the risk.

Children Missing from Education

The school recognises that children missing education are at risk of underachieving and may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. We follow the LA guidelines in monitoring such children. If a child is apparently “missing”, we endeavour to find that child as soon as possible, working with partner agencies, including the Police and Social Care if necessary.

Our Attendance Officer (Karen McLean) works closely with the school and its families to support good attendance. Where there are serious concerns, we work closely with Education Welfare and other agencies to ensure that children are safely in school. Where a child goes missing, we make every attempt to contact the family by phone, letter and home visits. Children missing for more than 10 days MUST be

referred to the LA (or earlier where there are existing safeguarding concerns), who will attempt to trace the family.

Children who do not attend for more than 20 days without notification are removed from the register.

Penalty Notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, 2 sessions = 1 day).
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

The Governing Body has the responsibility of setting down the guidelines and principles with regard to school attendance policy and procedure and ensuring compliance with School

Attendance Regulations. The Governing Body through the Headteacher will monitor and evaluate school attendance levels and review the effectiveness of this policy.